

GOVERNING INTERNATIONAL FISHERY AGREEMENT

SEPTEMBER 29, 1992.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. STUDDS, from the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 5617]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5617) to provide Congressional approval of a Governing International Fishery Agreement, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 5617 is to provide Congressional approval of the Governing International Fishery Agreement (GIFA) between the United States and the Republic of Estonia that the President transmitted to Congress on June 24, 1992. Approval of the GIFA will make possible joint ventures between the U.S. fishing industry and the Republic of Estonia in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). If allocations are available and other requirements of law are met, it will also allow Estonian vessels to fish in the EEZ.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA) requires that foreign fishing vessels operating in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone be registered in a country that has signed a GIFA with the United States. GIFAs are standardized agreements that generally require the foreign nation to acknowledge and obey U.S. laws regarding conservation and management of living marine resources. While GIFAs provide the framework under which foreign fishing may be authorized, they do not automatically allow such fishing to occur.

The Republic of Estonia owns a fleet of fishing vessels that previously operated in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans under a GIFA with the Soviet Union. With the breakup of the USSR, no fishery agreement between Estonia and the United States is in effect at this time, and Estonian vessels cannot fish, process, or undertake any type of fishing operations in the U.S. EEZ.

Stocks of Atlantic mackerel are currently at high levels. There is interest in the possibility of joint ventures between the fishing industries in the U.S. and the Republic of Estonia. Such ventures could lead to economic benefits for the United States fishing industry, but cannot be negotiated in final until a GIFA is in effect.

On June 24, 1992, the President notified Congress that an agreement between the United States and the Republic of Estonia had been signed. This agreement cannot take effect, however, until 60 days of continuous Congressional session have passed or until Congress approves it with legislation. Because 60 days of continuous session will not occur before the Congress adjourns, legislation is necessary for this agreement to take effect this year.

Congressional approval of H.R. 5617 will provide encouragement and the opportunity for United States fishermen to further develop the underutilized Atlantic mackerel stocks.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 5617 was introduced by Mr. Studds and Mr. Young of Alaska on July 9, 1992, and referred to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and its Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment.

On September 23, 1992, the full Committee met to mark up H.R. 5617. Mr. Studds asked for, and received, unanimous consent to discharge the Subcommittee from further consideration of the bill. H.R. 5617 was then ordered reported to the House by voice vote.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

H.R. 5617 provides Congressional approval of the Governing International Fishery Agreement between the United States and the Republic of Estonia, as contained in the message to Congress from the President of the United States dated June 24, 1992.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 2(l)(4) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee estimates that the enactment of H.R. 5617 will have no significant inflationary impact on prices and costs in the operation of the national economy.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

Clause 7(a) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 5617. However, clause 7(d) provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XI

1. With respect to the requirements of clause 2(1)(3)(A) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no oversight findings or recommendations on the subject of H.R. 5617 have been made by the Committee during the 102nd Congress.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, H.R. 5617 does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(D) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received no report of oversight findings and recommendations from the Committee on Government Operations on the subject of H.R. 5617.

4. With respect to the requirement of clause 2(1)(3)(C) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for H.R. 5617 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
September 25, 1992.

Hon. GERRY E. STUDDS,
*Acting Chairman, Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.R. 5617, a bill to provide Congressional approval of a governing international fishery agreement, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on September 23, 1992. CBO estimates that enactment of H.R. 5617 would result in no additional costs to the federal government.

The bill would grant Congressional approval to a fishery agreement between the United States and the Republic of Estonia.

Enactment of H.R. 5617 would not affect direct spending or receipts. Therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply to the bill. State and local governments would incur no costs as a result of enactment of this bill.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is John Webb, who can be reached at 226-2860.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. REISCHAUER.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, H.R. 5617 would make no changes in existing law.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The Committee has received no departmental reports on H.R. 5617.